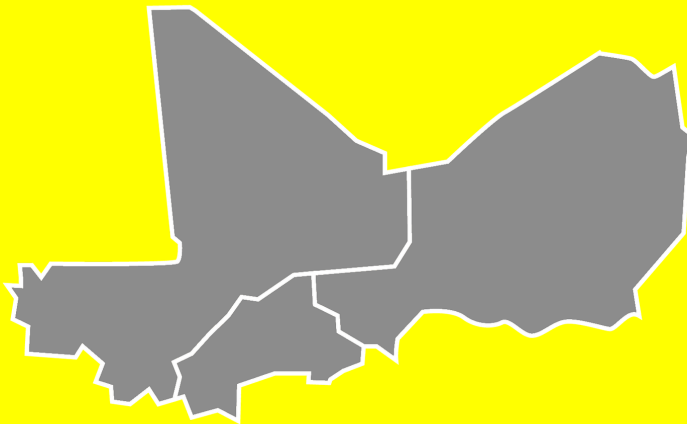


AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



**CIVIC SPACE AND CIVILIAN POPULATIONS
AT RISK IN THE CENTRAL SAHEL.**

URGENT NEED TO BREAK THE SILENCE!



**Advocacy note on human rights concerns in
Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger**

June 2026

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, 2022 and 2023, military officers came to power through coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, respectively, promising their people better governance, the protection of human rights and the end of the armed conflicts that has raged in the region since its outbreak in Mali in 2012.

Since then, the military authorities in these three countries, together in the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES) created in September 2023, have cloaked their policies in a narrative around “regained sovereignty”, the fight against “terrorism”, “the fight against imperialism” and “the return to traditional values”. These discourses, which find a certain echo on the African continent, operate as smokescreens obscuring the crackdown on human rights defenders, activists, journalists and opposition leaders, and hindering mobilization to denounce the serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in these countries.

The initial promises have indeed given way to a very worrying reality: a governance marked by authoritarian practices without political opposition; the systematic repression of critical voices; and ever more intense and deadly armed conflicts, the brunt of which is borne by civilian populations.

The duration of military-led transition regimes was extended from two years (in 2022) to five years in 2025 in Mali, from two years (2022) to five years in 2024 in Burkina Faso and to five years in Niger in 2025. Transitional parliaments and other state institutional bodies are made up of people appointed by the ruling military. Political parties were suspended and then dissolved in all three countries.

The military authorities of these three countries are attacking the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association: only demonstrations in favour of the authorities are allowed; independent media are suspended or subject to self-censorship; independent trade unions are suspended; national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are suspended or dissolved or subject to decrees seeking to control their activities. Human rights defenders, journalists, judges, political activists, who report or denounce human rights violations in these countries, are systematically repressed through the use of arbitrary arrests and detentions, incommunicado detentions, enforced disappearances, and targeted and discriminatory.

It is in this context of imposed silence that the armed conflicts continue to claim many civilian victims in the indifference of the international community. Organized armed groups, such as the Islamic State in the Sahel (IS-S) and the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM), control significant portions of territory in the three countries, and commit serious violations of international humanitarian law that may amount to war crimes: unlawful attacks, unlawful killings, and destruction of civilian property. Government forces and their allies in Wagner/Africa Corps are also responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law, which may amount to unlawful killings, torture, pillage, etc. These crimes go largely unpunished.

In this context, where no voice can speak freely in these three countries, there is an urgent need for African politicians, civil society and regional and continental organizations, to denounce the worrying reality of the human rights situation in the central Sahel. Without this mobilization, the populations of these three countries will continue to be deprived of their human rights, and authoritarian practices by the military authorities will continue to attract support, in a context of widespread disinformation.

This document aims to summarize the main concerns related to civic space and the ongoing armed conflicts in the Central Sahel, and to present recommendations to heads of state and government, as well as regional and international intergovernmental and human rights bodies, with a view to supporting and encouraging respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

I – A SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE

In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the military authorities have adopted decrees and laws drastically restricting the rights to freedom of expression, information and association and implemented authoritarian practices to repress any voice critical of the action of the authorities and any objective information on the armed conflict.

1.1 – ATTACKS AGAINST THE MEDIA

Attacks on the media have been characterised by the suspension of TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and institutions and the arrest of journalists.

In **Burkina Faso**, while Radio France International (RFI) and France 24 have been suspended since 2022 and 2023 respectively, the High Council for Communication (CSC) banned the broadcast of TV5 monde's programmes on 5 May 2026 for “misconduct, which relates to disinformation and the apology of terrorism, recorded from April to May 2026”.¹

Radio Omega's broadcasting licence was suspended for three months by the CSC in August 2025 for calling the government a “junta” on their Facebook page.²

In June 2024, the director of the publication of the bimonthly investigative newspaper L'Événement, Atiana Serge Oulon, the journalist Alain Traoré and the television presenters Kalifa Seré and Adama Bayala were arrested by the security services. In October 2024, the government announced that Atiana Serge Oulon, Kalifara Séké and Adama Bayala had been requisitioned by the army but did not reveal the fate and whereabouts of Alain Traoré. As of May 2025, all have been released except Atiana Serge Oulon, who is in detention according to Reporters Without Borders.³

¹ Le Monde, “Burkina Faso bans the broadcast of TV5Monde, accusing it of 'disinformation' and 'apology for terrorism' », 5 may 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2026/05/05/le-burkina-faso-interdit-la-diffusion-de-tv5monde-l-accusant-de-desinformation-et-d-apologie-du-terrorisme_6685629_3212.html

² Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026 (Index: POL 10/0320/2026), 21 april 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/en/.p113>.

³ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: april 2025 (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/.p.110>.

In **Mali**, the French media RFI, France 24, TF1 and LCI are suspended.⁴ Joliba TV was also suspended in November 2024 by the High Authority for Communication after a complaint filed by the High Council for Communication of Burkina Faso.⁵

In **Niger**, on 8 May 2026, the National Communication Observatory ordered the immediate shutdown of several media outlets, including France 24, RFI, Agence France-Presse, TV5 Monde and Jeune Afrique.⁶

Between May and November 2025, several journalists were arrested, including three from Sahara FM, Hamid Mahmoud (acting editor-in-chief), Mahaman Sani (news presenter) and Massaouda Jaharou (journalist), after announcing that Niger and Russia had terminated their security collaboration. While Massaouda Jaharou was released in June 2025, her two colleagues were charged with “threatening national defense” and “plotting against the authority of the state” before a military court.⁷

⁴ Le Monde, “Mali suspends French channels LCI and TF1 until further notice”, 14 november 2025, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/11/14/le-mali-suspend-jusqu-a-nouvel-ordre-les-chaines-francaises-lci-et-tf1_6653478_3212.html

⁵ Reporters without Borders (RSF), “Mali: withdrawal of the license of Joliba TV, the independent press in danger”, 26 november 2024, <https://rsf.org/fr/mali-retrait-de-la-licence-de-joliba-tv-la-presse-ind%C3%A9pendante-en-p%C3%A9ril>

⁶ RFI, “Niger suspends nine medias, Reporters without Borders asks for the lifting of the decision”, 10 may 2026, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20260510-le-niger-suspend-neuf-m%C3%A9dias-reporters-sans-fronti%C3%A8res-demande-la-lev%C3%A9e-de-la-d%C3%A9cision>

⁷ Amnesty International, “Niger: A serious step back for human rights since the 2023 coup d’Etat Amnesty International Submission to the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2026”, October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr43/0251/2025/en/>

I.2 – ATTACKS ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Obstacles to the right to freedom of association have increased in AES countries through legislation and repressive practices.

BURKINA FASO

29 JANUARY 2026

All political parties were dissolved after being suspended for three years.⁹

NOVEMBER 2025

A presidential decree imposed a three-month deadline on all national and international NGOs to close their accounts with commercial banks and transfer them to a recently created state-controlled bank within the Treasury, resulting in a risk of arbitrary freezing of funds, financial oversight and undue targeted sanctions.¹⁰

BETWEEN APRIL AND MAY 2026

Nearly 700 NGOs and associations were suspended or dissolved by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Mobility. If for some of them (205 precisely) the reason given is the “non-renewal of their proceedings in accordance with their statutes and rules of procedure and the law in force”, for the rest, the decision was taken without any specific reason being mentioned.⁸

JULY 2025

The International Organization for NGO Security (INSO), an association supporting NGOs in countries affected by armed conflict, was suspended for three months renewable.¹¹

MALI

13 MAY 2025

The authorities dissolved political parties by decree.¹²

DECEMBER 2023

At least four organizations were dissolved, including the Coordination of Movements, Associations and Supporters of Imam Mahmoud Dicko (CMAS) and the Observatory for Elections and Good Governance in Mali.¹³

⁸ Le Monde, “In Burkina Faso, nearly 700 associations and NGOs suspended or dissolved by the junta in power”, 8 May 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2026/05/08/au-burkina-faso-pres-de-700-associations-et-ong-suspendues-ou-dissoutes-par-la-junte-au-pouvoir_6687072_3212.html

⁹ Amnesty International, “Burkina Faso. The dissolution of more than a hundred NGOs and associations shows the intensification of repression against civil society.”, 16 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.fr/communiqués/burkina-faso-la-dissolution-de-plus-dune-certaine-dong-et-dassociations-temoigne-de-lintensification-de-la-repression-a-lencontre-de-la-societe-civile/>

¹⁰ See 7, previous page.

¹¹ See 7, previous page.

¹² Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, “Mali: Dissolving political parties is a step in the wrong direction, warn UN experts”, 22 May 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/press-releases/2025/05/mali-dissolution-political-parties-step-wrong-direction-warn-un-experts>

¹³ Amnesty International, The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 April 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>, p 251.

26 MARCH 2025

The President, Abdourahamane Tiani, issued a decree dissolving all political parties.

AUGUST 2025

The Ministry of the Interior dissolved several trade unions of justice professionals, under the pretext of “repeated abuses detrimental to the proper functioning of the public service”. The same month, the Nigerien President removed from the civil service Abdoul Nasser Bagna Abdourahamane and Moussa Mahamadou, respectively Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Autonomous Union of Nigerien Magistrates.¹⁴

I.3 – ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

Any critical expression exposes itself to repression in the countries of the Central Sahel. In 2025, Amnesty International documented more than 40 cases of journalists, human rights defenders and citizens arrested for simply expressing their opinions.¹⁵ The following cases are just a few examples of the misuse of the criminal justice system against civil society figures and politicians.

In **Burkina Faso**, on 1 September 2025, lawyer and human rights defender Ini Benjamine Esther Doli was arrested at home on her return from a stay abroad and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in December by the Ouagadougou High Court for, among other charges, “insulting the Head of State” and “demoralizing the armed forces”.¹⁶

In **Mali**, former Prime Minister Moussa Mara was arrested in August 2025 for posting on the social network X a message in which he said he would fight “by all means” for the rights of people detained for expressing their opinions. Charged with undermining the credit of the state and opposing legitimate authority, he was sentenced in October 2025 to one year's imprisonment.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, “Niger: A serious step back for human rights since the 2023 coup d’Etat Amnesty International Submission to the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group, April–May 2026”, October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr43/0251/2025/en/>

¹⁵ Amnesty International, « Silence and Repression: the new face of the Sahel, 20 October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/10/silence-and-repression-the-new-face-of-the-sahel/>

¹⁶ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026 (Index: POL 10/0320/2026), 21 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/fr/>, p113.

Rokiatou Doumbia aka Rose Poivron or Tata Combattre la vie Chère arrested since March 2023 for denouncing the cost of living and insecurity in Mali is detained on charges of “damaging the reputation of the state” and “criminal association”.¹⁷

In **Niger**, Moussa Tchangari, secretary general of the civil society organization Alternative Citizens' Spaces, was charged with “plotting against the authority of the state in intelligence with enemy powers” and returned to pre-trial detention on 3 January 2025, a month after his arrest. Several former ministers and state officials who had been arbitrarily arrested after the July 2023 coup were released in March 2025 with the exception of former Interior Minister Hama Adamou Souley. Former President Mohamed Bazoum and his wife, Hadiza Mabrouk, who were arrested in the 2023 coup, remain arbitrarily detained.¹⁸

I.4 – ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

In the AES, activists, members of civil society, politicians and judges have been victims of enforced disappearance or abductions by alleged members of security forces. Among many cases:

In **Mali**, lawyer and politician Me Mountaga Tall was abducted on 3 May 2026 from his home in Bamako by armed and hooded men travelling in unregistered vehicles. His family denounced the lack of information about his fate or detention.¹⁹ Thirteen days later, Mountaga Tall's son was also abducted and his fate and whereabouts remain unknown.²⁰ In December 2024, Ibrahim Nabi Togola, president of the opposition New Vision for Mali, was abducted by suspected state security elements and his fate and whereabouts remained unknown until his release 45 days later.²¹

¹⁷ Amnesty International, « Mali: Authorities must immediately quash unjust conviction and sentence of former prime minister Moussa Mara. », 9 February 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/02/mali-moussa-mara/>

¹⁸ Amnesty International, “Niger: A serious step back for human rights since the 2023 coup d'Etat Amnesty International Submission to the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2026”, October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr43/0251/2025/en/>

¹⁹ Amnesty International, “Mali: Authorities must immediately clarify the fate and whereabouts of lawyer and pro-democracy politician Mountaga Tall”, 4 May 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/05/mali-mountaga-tall/>

²⁰ RFI, “Mali: After his father, a son of lawyer Mountaga Tall has also been kidnapped”, 19 May 2026, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20260519-mali-apt%C3%A8s-son-p%C3%A8re-un-fils-de-l-avocat-mountaga-tall-enlev%C3%A9-%C3%A0-son-tour>

²¹ Amnesty International, Enforced disappearances as a means of repression by military authorities in West Africa, 30 April 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2025/04/enforced-disappearances-west-africa/>

In **Burkina Faso**, the national secretary of the political movement *Servir et non se servir* (SENS), Idrissa Barry, was arrested on 13 March 2025 by people claiming to be police officers. Four days before his arrest, SENS issued a statement condemning the “mass murderous attacks” perpetrated by the government and its auxiliary forces against unarmed civilians in Solenzo, Bankui region. To date, no information is available on his fate.²²

In **Niger**, on 30 September 2023, the blogger, human rights defender and journalist Samira Sabou was victim of an enforced disappearance for several days after she posted on her Facebook account a photo of a document produced by the Nigerien army concerning the transfer of several officers to different parts of the country. She was taken from her mother’s home in Niamey by masked men and detained at an unknown location before being released.²³

1.5 – TARGETED AND FORCED CONSCRIPTIONS IN THE ARMY

In April 2023, the government of **Burkina Faso** promulgated a decree “on general mobilization and safeguarding” which provides for the conscription of active and inactive members of the defense and security forces, and that of all “young people aged 18 or over”. In practice, the law has been used to repress people considered to be dissenters despite judicial decisions calling for their release or suspending these requisitions.²⁴ For example, on 24 December 2023, former Foreign Minister Ablassé Ouedraogo was arrested at his home on his return from a trip abroad, having been designated for conscription along with more than a dozen journalists, politicians and other critics.²⁵ Between 9 and 12 August 2024, seven magistrates known for handling critical cases of the regime were notified of their conscription.²⁶

²² Amnesty International, Enforced disappearances as a means of repression by military authorities in West Africa, 30 April 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2025/04/enforced-disappearances-west-africa/>

²³ Amnesty International, “Niger: A serious step back for human rights since the 2023 coup d’Etat” Amnesty International Submission to the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group, April–May 2026”, October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr43/0251/2025/en/>

²⁴ Amnesty International, “Burkina Faso: Free human rights defender Daouda Diallo and end discriminatory conscription of independent voices”, 22 January 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/burkina-faso-free-human-rights-defender-daouda-diallo-and-end-discriminatory-conscription-of-independent-voices/>

²⁵ Amnesty International, “Burkina Faso: Free human rights defender Daouda Diallo and end discriminatory conscription of independent voices”, 22 January 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/burkina-faso-free-human-rights-defender-daouda-diallo-and-end-discriminatory-conscription-of-independent-voices/>

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, “Burkina Faso: Conscription is used to punish prosecutors and judges. (Illegal orders should be revoked and court decisions respected.)”, 21 August 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2024/08/21/burkina-faso-la-conscription-est-utilisee-pour-punir-des-procureurs-et-des-juges>

In **Niger**, in December 2025, the government passed a new ordinance on civic mobilization for national defense purposes,²⁷ paving the way for the conscription of Nigeriens and the possible targeted use of this law to crack down on critical voices.

I.6 – DEPRIVATION OF CITIZENSHIP

In August 2024, **Niger** established a national registry of persons, group of persons and entities allegedly involved in terror activities and other offences against the country's strategic interests and constituting a threat to public safety and tranquillity (FPGE). Being enrolled in the FPGE can include having one's assets frozen, restrictions on the right to freedom of movement, and even deprivation of citizenship, without a definitive conviction. Any citizen can be enrolled in the FPGE at the state of prosecution. The registry has already been misused to target critics and temporarily deprive them of their Nigerien citizenship. Between October 2024 and January 2025, at least 21 people were temporarily deprived of their nationality, including former ministers and relatives of former President Mohamed Bazoum.²⁸



²⁷ Republic of Niger, Ordonnance n°2025-42 of 26 december 2025.

²⁸ Amnesty International, "Niger: A serious step back for human rights since the 2023 coup d' Etat Amnesty International Submission to the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2026", October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr43/0251/2025/en/>

II – WAR CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST CIVILIANS BY ALL PARTIES TO THE ARMED CONFLICT WITH IMPUNITY

The armed conflicts in the central Sahel are among the continent's deadliest ones. The civilian populations in the three countries are victims of crimes committed by both armed groups and state armed forces, their national auxiliaries and allied foreign fighters. War crimes include unlawful attacks against civilians, murder, torture and pillage.

The armed conflicts have plunged the three countries into a serious humanitarian crisis. The Central Sahel has nearly 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) (2 million in Burkina Faso, 548,000 in Niger and 415,000 in Mali).²⁹ Nearly 7.5 million children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.³⁰ According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 14,800 schools had closed in the region by mid-2025, depriving 3 million children of access to education and safe spaces.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the armed conflict affects a large part of the country. Between 2024³¹ and 2025,³² according to data collected by Amnesty International, armed groups have killed at least 288 civilians. State armed forces killed 223 civilians in Soro and Nodin and several hundred in Marmiga and nearby Mansila villages in 2024.³³ In 2025, 58 civilians were killed by the army and the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) — a militia affiliated with the government, in Solenzo.³⁴

²⁹ United Nations, Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, "Central Sahel: Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, three countries on the brink of collapse" 12 May 2026, <https://unric.org/fr/sahel-central-mali-burkina-faso-et-niger-trois-pays-au-bord-du-gouffre/>

³⁰ UN Info, « Sahel : 7,5 million children in crisis, UNICEF rings the alarm », 26 april 2026, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2026/04/1158743>

³¹ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/_p110.

³² Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026 (Index: POL 10/0320/2026), 21 April 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/en/_p113.

³³ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/_p110.

³⁴ Amnesty International, La Situation Des Droits Humains Dans Le Monde : avril 2026 (Index : POL 10/0320/2026), 21 avril 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/fr/_p147.

Mali

In Mali, armed groups IS-S and GSIM are increasing their violent attacks. Amnesty International has documented more than 142 killings of civilians between 2024,³⁵ 2025³⁶ and April 2026 by these armed groups. State armed forces, for their part, killed more than 135 civilians according to data collected by Amnesty International, including 24 children.³⁷

Niger

Between 2024³⁸ and 2025,³⁹ Amnesty International documented the killing of at least 166 civilians by armed groups, including IS-S, with the attack in Motogatta that killed 22 people in January 2024 and the attack on the mosque in Fambita that killed 44 people in March 2025 among others.

Moreover, State armed forces killed 50 civilians in a drone strike on Tiawa village in January 2024.⁴⁰

IMPUNITY

Serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the context of the armed conflicts taking place in the Central Sahel remain largely unpunished. Domestic remedies are almost non-existent, with no action being taken on complaints or any investigations having been conducted into war crimes.

Between 18 and 24 June 2026, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger deposited their formal notifications of withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).⁴¹

³⁵ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>, 29 april 2025, pp. 251-252.

³⁶ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026 (Index: POL 10/0320/2026), 21 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/en/>, p 249.

³⁷ See above Global annual reports of april 2025 and april 2026, p 313.

³⁸ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>, 29 april 2025, pp. 279-280.

³⁹ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026 (Index: POL 10/0320/2026), 21 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/0320/2026/en/>, p 274.

⁴⁰ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025, (Index POL 10/8515/2025), 29 april 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>, 29 april 2025, p 280.

⁴¹ Amnesty International, "Burkina Faso/Mali/Niger: Announcements of ICC withdrawal a serious backwards step in fight against impunity in the Sahel region and worldwide", 20 September 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/09/burkina-faso-mali-niger-icc-withdrawal/>

III – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMANDATIONS

The populations of the central Sahel are victims of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. However, they cannot denounce this situation without facing repression. Only the narrative of the military authorities and disinformation are allowed. Breaking the silence is urgently needed to ensure the safety of civilian populations in armed conflicts that risk spreading across the sub-region, to denounce authoritarian practices and to counter anti-human rights narratives.⁴²

Amnesty International recommends:

To the heads of State and Government:

- Express in their bilateral relations with the authorities of the AES countries their deep concern regarding the stifling of civic space and violations of human rights;
- Publicly denounce the serious violations of the rights to freedom of expression, information and association in the countries of the central Sahel;
- Express public support for civil society in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, muzzled by the restriction of civic space and to call for the immediate release of arbitrarily detained persons;
- Urge the authorities to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of everyone in the AES countries;
- Call for the protection of civilians in the context of the armed conflicts in the central Sahel;
- Ask the authorities of the AES to reconsider without delay their decision to withdraw from the Rome Statute.
- Support the fight against impunity for crimes under international law, including war crimes.

⁴² Amnesty International, « Silence and Repression: the new face of the Sahel, 20 october 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/10/silence-and-repression-the-new-face-of-the-sahel/>

To the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

- Call upon the states of the central Sahel to restore the activity of political parties, NGOs and associations and the media in accordance with the rights to freedom of expression, information and association, and to fully comply with the Commission's 2017 Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa;
- Call upon the states of the central Sahel to immediately and unconditionally release persons arbitrarily detained and to put an end to the practices of arbitrary detentions, incommunicado detentions, enforced disappearances and targeted conscriptions;
- Call upon Niger and Burkina Faso to repeal the provisions relating to the deprivation of nationality incompatible with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Commission's 2013 Resolution on the Right to Nationality. The African Commission should also urge the central Sahel countries to ratify the Protocol Relating to the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa;
- Open an investigation, including through a hybrid format, into the situation of civic space in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and publish a report of its findings and recommendations;
- Consider the situation of the civic space in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger during its next review of the state party reports of the three countries submitted to it in accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- Publicly denounce violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in the context of the armed conflicts in central Sahel and call for an end to impunity.

To the African Union and its special envoy for the Sahel:

- Proactively leverage the good offices of the Special Envoy for the Sahel to engage with the three countries with a view to ensuring they respect and uphold their international and regional human rights obligations and commitments, including those enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which they are all states parties;
- Call on the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and call for an end to impunity and to consider any support to this end;
- Systematically put the situation in the AES countries on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council.

To the Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

- In accordance with Article 11(1) of its Protocol, and through its Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution, urgently conduct a fact-finding mission to central Sahel to investigate the situation of human rights in the three countries and publish its findings and recommendations.
- Through its Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution, urgently convene a public hearing on the situation of human rights in central Sahel and to which it should invite and receive submissions from relevant stakeholders including civil society organizations and human rights defenders.

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**SILENCE AND REPRESSION:
THE NEW FACE
OF THE SAHEL**



**STATE OF THE WORLD'S
HUMAN RIGHTS:
APRIL 2026**



**STAND WITH THE ACTIVISTS AND
JOURNALISTS PERSECUTED IN THE SAHEL**



